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*THE SALAMANDER*, by Owen Johnson.  
(Bobbs-Merrill Company.)

**A**S a story "The Salamander" is clever and entertaining; as an exposition of a certain type of American young womanhood it is less successful. The idea of the salamander as set forth in the foreword is far more ingenious than the character of Dore Baxter as drawn in the story. That all young women of today are more or less salamanderic is indisputable; but that a young woman such as Dore, without visible means of support could live in New York City and be fed by her dozens of admirers, clothed by the proceeds of their gifts, amused by playing one against another, yet throughout maintaining an unsullied virtue, seems straining the situation beyond the point of credence.

We do not believe that the kind of men that swarm around a girl like Dore, hand out jewels, furs, automobiles, etc., etc., in return for just a bright smile. The men who swarm are not in the charity business; the girls who let them swarm are not of the strictly virtuous type.

Dore's revolt against the commonplaces of her early life, her passionate love of excitement and adventure are natural and well done. Had Mr.

Johnson seen fit to give her a small but inadequate income, we might more easily accept her extraordinary virtue. But with only her wits to enable her to reach the pockets of enough men to completely clothe, feed and shelter her,—we are incredulous.

In order to back up this absolute virtue game, the author resorts to extraordinary melodramatic situations, which make good reading but stumbling philosophy. He wiles her into a mesh of difficulties where she is on the verge of marrying any one of several men whom she dislikes, eloping without ceremony with another, or adopting a career, yet in the properest and most conventional manner she marries the best man of all and settles down into a perfectly staid matron.

Mr. Johnson's ideas are better than his execution. He meant to show woman's revolt against traditions and conventions, but what he has done is to write an impossible, unconvincing, yet amusing story, showing the glare of the Great White Way, but ignoring its shadows and tragedies.

His Foreword is full of promises which he does not fulfill. His theories and his facts do not agree and Dore is frankly incredible; even the satire which we are led to expect fades beneath the improbabilities handed out as facts.

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